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AUTHOR Raines, Max R.
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ABSTRACT

The compatibility between community service and quality education is discussed. Variables that are indicators of quality education are: cost, or the yearly tuition rate; its distance from the consumer; the quotient of intelligence among those who are rejected as applicants; student/faculty ratio; and faculty degrees. Public service or community service functions of the community college provide excellent linkage systems between community leaders and the knowledge resource systems that exist in the university and in industry, as well as in the State and Federal governments. Locally based colleges could become a rich source of community agents. This would call for the establishment of a problem-focused center or institutions at the college with a specific administrator from the cooperating community organization designated to provide continuing liaison and leadership. Public service is not only compatible with quality education but also could become a major prerequisite for quality in many of our institutions. (DB)

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COMMUNITY SERVICES AND QUALITY EDUCATION:

COMPATIBLE OR INCOMPATIBLE

Max R. Raines
Michigan State University

When I accepted the assignment to discuss the compatibility between community service and quality education, I must confess I had not fully realized the complexity of the issue. The initial problem of course is simply one of defining terms. I have spent the past five years trying to arrive at a reasonable definition of community services. By the same token, any number of philosophers have given a lifetime to defining quality education. Realizing the lack of progress among the philosophers, I decided to lend a hand and I am happy to report what could be a break-through on the definition and quantification of quality education. As a matter of fact, I have recently developed what may be an irrefutable method of quantifying a series of critical variables associated with quality education. If I am correct, we will have for the first time a numerical description of quality education. To derive the formula, I simply focused on those variables which appear as unchallenged indicators of quality.

The first of these indicators is cost or more specifically, the yearly tuition rate.

I think we have an established principle in our free enterprise system that any product which is allowed to circulate on a free and open market will eventually find its own level of worth and can then be judged in comparison with other similar products on a qualitative basis.

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For example, most anyone today will agree that beef is superior to fish or chicken -- the more expensive it becomes the better it tastes.

The next variable which is important in assessing quality education is found in its distance from the consumer. Beginning with the "grass is greener" concept, one can extrapolate that principle to justify computation of the average distance each student travels to reach a particular college. I think on a simple behavioristic basis you will have to agree with me that the further one travels to obtain a given product, tangible or intangible, the higher the quality is likely to be.

If you have any doubts about this principle of distance, I suggest that you apply it in connection with procuring after-dinner speakers. Even though I am not sure what anticipation of quality you have held for this particular after-dinner speech, I can assure you that your anticipation is infinitely higher than would be found among educators in my home community of East Lansing on a similar occasion

A third vital indicator of quality is related to the quotient of intelligence one might find among those who are rejected as applicants. For example, if you can claim that the average College Board score for those applicants who were denied admission was 650 you have established almost beyond question the quality of education that is to be offered. In fact, the contribution of this variable is even greater than the age old variable called "freshman flunk out rate." An institution can readily manipulate the flunk out rate but it cannot appreciably affect the scores of its applicants on any short-range basis.

These, then, represent three critical variables and because of their dynamic relationship, I feel it appropriate to multiply (cost) times (tuition rate) times (average of rejected board scores.)

In this qualitative formula, I find only two additional variables of consequence. One pertains to that impeccable symbol of quality -- namely student-faculty ratio -- the lower the ratio, the greater the quality.

I would qualify that ratio with just one final variable in this quality index rating (QIR). We know that the degrees held by the faculty are generally viewed as an automatic indicator of quality. Some institutions have faculty Ph.D. ratios of only about 1 in 20 while more prestigious institutions will have at least 19 out of 20 with doctorates. (Of course, there always appear to be a few of these Bucky Fuller's who simply refuse to earn an "honest" doctorate.) To arrive at a quality index rating one must multiply the student-faculty ratio times the Ph.D. ratio on the faculty, with a correction of (-.2) for Ed.D.'s. Then one divides this product by the cost, distance, rejected score variables to achieve a QIR (pronounced "queer").

In searching for a model of absolute quality I first examined the Mark Hopkins paradigm so often quoted in the literature. As you will recall, the epitomy of quality education has been expressed as Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a capable student at the other end. I hypothesized for the sake of this test that a prospective student would pay at lease $3,000 in tuition for this opportunity and that at least two students would be willing to travel at least 10,000 miles for such an experience. It is likely that the possibility of becoming a renaissance man would attract two students with at least 700 Board scores. If

one were rejected, this would produce a rejected applicant with a 700 score. Since the student-faculty ratio is one to one, you have an absolute indicator of quality. I was about to divide the 21 billion points into this 1-to-1 ratio when I suddenly realized my model had blown up in my face. I can find no record that Mark Hopkins had an earned doctorate -- not even an Ed.D., so I turned my attention to another possible model of only slightly lesser potential. This model called for a comparison of Harvard University with our local community college in Lansing. Of course, I suspected that the comparison might favor Harvard but I must confess that even I was astounded when the computer revealed that Harvard attained a quality index rating (QIR) which was 67.703 times greater than Lansing Community College. I feel comfortable reporting on this only because of the great distance from Lansing, and I trust you will keep this matter to yourselves lest I tell the news media where Broward County Community College and Miami-Dade Community College numbered on this qualitative index. So, now that we have laid to rest the problem of quality, I want to get on with my assignment.

I should like to relate an observation from John Gardner's often quoted speech on "Quality in Higher Education." Speaking to the American Association of Junior Colleges in 1957 he said:

> Arguments about quality in higher education tend to be rather heated and -- it must be said -- rather pointless. There are many reasons why such conversations become muddled, the foremost being that they so often degenerate into arguments over "elite" versus "mass" education .... a modern society such as ours cannot choose to do one or the other. It has no choice but to do both.

I would certainly concur with Gardner's observation and with his subsequent support for diversity in higher education. He contended that each type of

institution should be judged on the basis of its intended and assumed mission rather than on some generic concept of the role of a college or university.

Despite the reasonableness of his position, I am afraid that there are many within the halls of ivy who would insist that teaching and research are the only acceptable functions for higher education. In fact, for some the idea of public service is apparently a potential cancer in the bosom of the academy. If allowed to grow unchecked, they feel it will produce entanglements with society that will eventually destroy the academy as the bastion of intellectual freedom.

Anyone who reads the history of higher education becomes acutely aware of the continuing struggle to maintain the proper balance of independence and dependence between the university and society. As the government turns increasingly to the universities not only for research capabilities and for fundamental policy advisement as it has done since the days of John Kennedy, we have to face the potential impact of federal involvement on the academy. Theodore Lowi (1970) maintains that, while education has always served various segments of society (particularly social class structures), it has managed to avoid alliances with a political regime. He insists that the recent student revolution reflected the intuitive awareness of activists that the university was becoming a third and very influential partner in the corporate state. Lowi and others who are greatly concerned with power and influence questions are deeply disturbed by the spectre of technocratic multi-versities symbiotically linked to federal resources. I, too, see the basis for some concern; but I think that there is no conclusive evidence that the autonomy of the academy has been impaired by the public service activities of our land grant universities in the last 100 years. Somehow I have the feeling that those who constantly see a loss of institutional autonomy in any public service may hold a kinship to those individuals who are cautious about

loving another person for fear of losing their identity. (I wonder if it is just a coincidence that the academy chose to confer bachelor degrees?) By the same token, I would admit that public service can be a "heavy trip" as well. In my association with Michigan State, which is most proud to have been the first land grant college, I found they spoke of their mission with such reverence I was quite surprised to learn that the Morrill Act of 1862 was not spelled MORAL.

I would argue that there is sufficient diversity among institutions and within institutions that the symbiosis feared by Robert Wolff is unlikely. I would agree with Irving Kristol (1970) that a community of scholars is seldom capable of behaving in concert. After all, the traditional definition for a faculty member is "one who thinks otherwise." About the only thing I have found that a university faculty can agree on is the importance of resisting change.

Kenneth Benne (1956) has provided delightful insight into the dynamic tension which makes a college or university function. He pointed out that the university as a social system has two major regions -- a central region and a peripheral region. In the center region, we find those professors who are members of the arts and sciences and graduate schools. Here we will find maximum resistance to the norms and influences of social systems outside the university. Also, this is where one finds the strongest motivation toward maintenance of the social system in a traditional form, with great concern for "symbolic hygiene." The peripheral regions of the university are made up of professional schools along with those divisions which are engaged in extension or service activities.

Those in the peripheral regions are more transient, moving in and out of the university, taking jobs in the professions, or government, or industry, while those in the center tend to be less mobile. To some extent the members of the

periphery form a buffer zone for those in the central region. Benne observed that the tension between the center and the periphery is not surprising -- in fact, he says it is a healthy condition. It actually helps to moderate the independence-dependence struggle. Benne also comments that the art of university administration at its best is when it uses this tension creatively.

> The virtue of the university center is to maintain precise, accurate, sufficiently qualified statements and generalizations about any number of things. The center maintains a tentativeness with respect to matters of knowledge where tentativeness is needed and attacks with vigor (those) knowledge claims which incorporate insufficient intellectual rigor. A university could not be a university without these virtues. The periphery of the university has its virtues too. Typically it is closer to the interests, concerns, and the maintenance and growth requirements of other parts of the society than the center is. Members of the periphery cannot dispense with the category of social importance; they must use the categories of urgency and emergency in making their judgements about emphases in teaching and in research. In a sense they must bring the wider society to the university -- they must mediate between the wider society and the center of the university.

Benne emphasizes that these regions need each to maintain the balance of the system. Not only do I believe that involvement in society is healthy for higher education, but I also believe that we are moving into a new set of circumstances in society which mandate involvement. Almost any writer one encounters speaks to the dynamic changes taking place in our lives. I regret that Tofler's Future Shock has become somewhat passe in chic circles because he has done a remarkable job -- perhaps somewhat sensationalized, but a remarkable job of documenting the changes.

Arnold Toynbee (1968) in his introduction to Campus 1980 makes it very clear that we must give up the notion that there is a chronological division between the educational stage of life and the practice stage of life. While this was true in earlier times he observes that "the pace of change has become so rapid that the quantum of change which a human being now has to digest within

a lifetime has become almost too great for human nature to cope with ..." He, along with other observers, called for greater use of higher education in resolving societal problems.

For the remainder of this presentation, I want to focus my attention on the public service or community service function which is seeking to help people, or respond effectively and creatively to change. Let me start by giving you a few rather typical examples of community services recently implemented by community colleges in our Kellogg Consortium. This consortium which operated last year sought to encourage community services development among community colleges, particularly those who were in the process of launching community services. Directors of the twenty-four programs spent a total of six weeks with us at Michigan State and subsequently were visited by Gunder Myran and myself. Near the conclusion of the project we asked them to discuss programs which they had developed. As you listen to these eight very brief vignettes, decide which ones you would accept as being compatible with quality education. Please assume that these activities were effectively managed.

1. Black Hawk Community College implemented an adult basic education program by establishing an adult learning center for a model neighborhood in Rock Island, Illinois. At the time of the report 150 adults were enrolled.

2. Butler Community College co-sponsored a fire school for professional and volunteer firemen from Butler County and surrounding counties last summer. More than 300 firemen attended a series of classes which sought to upgrade fire fighting techniques, rescue operations, and use of new equipment.

3. An environmental study was launched by Caldwell Community College in cooperation with Appalachian State University to educate the public to an awareness of the need for the control of pollution, as well as the potential role of zoning in helping to increase control.

4. Realizing that citizens had limited opportunity to see and develop appreciation of opera, Butler County Community College established a program called Operalog. Seventy-five interested citizens attended sessions which analyzed each opera prior to traveling to Pittsburgh as a group to see each performance.

5. Corning Community College sponsored a public forum series on Cable TV which dealt with some of the critical issues facing public schools in that area.

6. Geogebic Community College established a consumer education and homemaking program for ADC mothers which focused on budgeting, purchasing, home skills, child care, and building positive self-image. Paraprofessionals from the constituency itself were used as linking agents.

7. Halifax Community College reclaimed an abandoned school and established a training program for persons who were both handicapped and poverty stricken. Adult basic education and manual skills have been emphasized. This has now become a cooperative effort of a wide range of community agencies in that county.

8. Indian River Community College has established an Emergency Training Center to enable interested community members to provide emergency medical assistance as needed and in cooperation with local doctors and hospitals.

9. Polk Community College established a human motivation program for parolees. This thirty-hour program uses the Earl Nightengale tapes to motivate and build self-confidence in the parolees. The participants also work with psychology students during the last six hours of the program.

These are but a few illustrations which give some idea of the range of activities.

In virtually every program imparting knowledge was involved. In most of them, skill development was included, and, in a few cases, attitude formation was a point of focus. Which, if any of these programs, then, were more appropriate to the standards of quality education?

(1) Is it more important that the firemen of Butler County learn new techniques for their professional development or that interested citizens gain a deeper appreciation of opera?

(2) Does Halifax Community College have any business running a special program for the handicapped and the poor? Should Goegebic College be expending its energies in consumer education with ADC mothers?

(3) Bringing it closer to home, how about the relevance of the Emergency Training Program at Indian River as a reflection of quality education or the effort at Polk Community College to develop more positive images among prisoners?

How shall we determine which public service activities shall take priority or whether they shall be offered in the first place? I have some questions that might be useful in reaching that determination.

1. Is it a service which any other agency or institution could potentially render as well or better?

2. Does involvement in this activity present opportunities for revitalization of instructional capabilities of faculty members?

3. Does the activity hold promise for establishing cooperative alliances with other organizations which could strengthen community capability for problem solving?

4. Is there a likelihood that the service can continue after any outside funding has been exhausted?

5. Does the activity present opportunities for the locally based college to develop its potential as a linkage agency in a knowledge dissemination and utilization system?

Now lets use these questions to review one of these programs. For example, was there any other agency in Halifax County equipped or willing to establish a skill training program for the handicapped? From all I could determine, the answer was "No." In fact, support at the local level was non-existent in the beginning. It was not until a dedicated and charismatic young black administrator

demonstrated that something could be done to attract local interest. Whether it will survive or not probably will depend on how much support it can generate outside of the community. (I started to say federally, but now I guess a foundation is about the only hope.) At the time of my visit no faculty had become involved from the college, nor did I sense that they would be inclined to do so. It did appear that some collaborative support was emerging among some of the local agencies. I could see no evidence that the college was serving as a linkage agency to other resource systems that might have existed at the universities or in the medical centers. There was a linkage, however, to the Department of Rehabilitation within the state.

What is the answer then? Should the college be offering the service? I would say that on the basis of information I have right now, it might seek ways of being established by the county as a separate agency with its own funding. Should the college have been involved in the first place? I'll let you answer that one if you will promise to go to Halifax before you give me your answer.

Time does not permit me to analyze other programs, but before I conclude I do want to suggest a tentative model for your consideration. During the past year Dave Bushnell, formerly of Project Focus, and I have been adapting the resource linkage model of Ronald Havelock for use in community problem solving. It is our hypothesis that locally based colleges could become excellent linkage systems between community leaders and the knowledge resource systems which exist in the university and in industry, as well as in the state and federal governments. When one talks to the harrassed city official or hospital administrator or agency head he soon learns of their disenchantment

with "high powered" consultants. The typical complaint is that too often they "blow in, blow off, and blow out." This suggests a need for a capable linkage agent who can achieve a well honed sensitivity to local needs and conditions and who, at the same time, has kept abreast of developments within a given field of research and development.

Just recently, for example, I found a young community college biology instructor who was working with a local ecology commission in an effort to clean up local streams and lakes. They were using the skills of this instructor to locate relevant sources of knowledge and technology. His enthusiasm for the project was contagious and it had carried over to his students and even to a few of his colleagues. Examples such as this make one conscious of the potential resources in the college staff.

It has seemed to us that locally based colleges could become a rich source of community agents whether they be called resource specialists, or knowledge linkers, or urban agents, or whatever. If this idea is to work we are convinced that it will call for establishment of a problem focused center or institutions at the college with a specific administrator from the cooperating community organization designated to provide continuing liaison and leadership. In any funding pattern the community organization should be recipients of the money so that it may contract with the community college for linkage services. Operational money in the contract should provide funds for maintaining a center at the college, in-service training for college staff, some travel and overtime pay for faculty participants. It is important not only that each center should have a specific problem focus, but also that it be established on an ad hoc basis so that it can be disbanded when it has outlived its usefulness.

Please understand that I am not suggesting a plan that would send faculty members in all directions to find problems to solve, but rather a well defined effort, with appropriate training, a contractual arrangement and careful definition of specific responsibilities of staff members.

Let me tell you why I think many faculty members will respond to the opportunity. In two separate surveys of community college faculty members in thirty-five different community colleges, I found that one-fourth to one-third of the faculty expressed high interest in potential involvement in a variety of community development activities. I think these faculty members were interested because in many cases their teaching assignments had become quite routine. Without creative opportunities for staff renewal, I don't see how any college can maintain quality education. Let me describe a pattern of development which is familiar to those who work in community colleges.

I am sure you've all observed the familiar pattern of the eager young faculty member, fresh from a graduate degree, who takes his or her first teaching assignment. During the first two years the new instructor is caught up in the effort to adjust to the freshman student. In many cases, it takes at least a year for a neophyte to learn that material from his or her last graduate class does not educate but simply bewilders the freshman. If the instructor is able to make the transition from what must be taught to what might be learned, he will start teaching the students who actually come to class instead of the one's he might wished to have had. Consequently, there will be a productive period in developing a syllabus which meets their capacities for learning. But after this challenge, what then? Now comes the time for the "no man's land" of faculty politics. Depending on fortitude and frustration tolerance, the

instructor eventually runs the course of the faculty committee circuit. Once he or she has completed the circuit it is time to look for something else.

With mounting financial pressures our young instructor is apt to look for some kind of "moonlighting" opportunity. If one is found, it will call for a low profile so absence from campus will be less noticeable. At this point interest in professional development subsides with less and less interest in his institutional involvement. It is hard to say how many faculty members follow this pattern, but whenever I describe it to a faculty group, I see many smiles of recognition.

If this pattern is an accurate reflection of what happens to promising young instructors, then I submit that public service is not only compatible with quality education, it could become a major prerequisite for quality in many of our institutions.

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